

**Commonwealth of Virginia**

**RFP 720C-04393-14C**

**ADDENDUM #1**

**Issue Date:** May 21, 2014

**RFP Title:** Support Intensive Scale (SIS®) Assessments and Management Activities

**AGENCY:** Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) - Office of Forensic Services

**Purpose:** RFP Clarification and Offeror Questions and Answers

The following Questions were submitted to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services under RFP 720C-04393-14C. Questions are reprinted along with the department's answer.

**Q1** The RFP states: *Each individual will have the SIS® completed regarding his/her support needs on a triennial basis. ...The completed "Supports Intensity Scale®" (Sections I – III plus supplemental questions/risk assessment) is completed every 3 years (triennially) for adults and every 2 years (biennially) for children. During the other years, only the Supplemental Questions/Risk Assessment is required, unless there is reason to believe that the individual's supports need have changed significantly in other areas of the scale.*

Clearly, the vendor is to complete the Risk Assessment/Supplemental Questions whenever a SIS assessment is required. Please confirm whether the risk assessment/supplemental questions that are conducted in years when a SIS assessment is not being completed will be the responsibility of the vendor or will continue to be completed by the CSB/BHA?

**A1** **The CSBs/BHAs will complete the risk assessments/supplemental questions conducted in years when a SIS assessment is not completed.**

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**Q2** The RFP includes the phrase *"to include an average of 2 assessments per day for one FTE."*

We have demonstrated across states the superior quality and cost-effectiveness of a SIS project model that utilizes part-time, highly trained independent contractors as assessors. For this project, would the Department permit vendors to propose implementing use of part-time, independent contractors to perform SIS assessments vs. FTEs?

**A2** **Yes.**

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**Q3** The RFP states that the *reassessments shall be scheduled two weeks in advance*. Would it be correct to assume that routine triennial assessments must be scheduled **at least** two weeks in advance, but that the Offeror may schedule further in advance, at the convenience of the individual and team? If not, please clarify.

**A3** **All assessments must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance of the proposed date. Triennial assessments must be completed not more than 60 days prior to the annual ISP.**

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**Q4** The RFP states: *Referrals will come through DBHDS as new waivers, change in status assessments or when appeals are needed.*

a. Who will be responsible for communicating referrals to the vendor?

- b. In what format will vendor receive referrals—electronically, via fax, via phone, etc.?
- c. Please specify the information that will be included in the referral (e.g., individual and CM contact information, providers, guardian status).

- A4**
- a. **DBHDS regional staff will communicate referrals to the vendor(s).**
  - b. **Referrals will be an encrypted electronic communication.**
  - c. **DBHDS and the vendor will collaboratively finalize the format and information contained in the referrals.**

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**Q5** The RFP states: *Assessments must be completed within 45-60 days prior to the annual planning (ISP) meeting for that year.*

Information about each individual's **ISP anniversary date** will be known to the vendor in advance. It is likely that the vendor will **not** know any individual's specific **ISP meeting date** in advance, as the meeting date will likely be set, within the Department's specified window of time, by the CM, according to the preferences of the individual and the planning team.

- a. To permit the vendor to plan SIS scheduling in an orderly and advance manner, would the Department permit the vendor to target the SIS interview **within 45–60 days prior** to the **ISP anniversary date**?
- b. Please describe the window of time within which case managers currently must schedule the ISP meeting, relative to the individual's ISP anniversary date?

- A5**
- a. **Yes. The assessment must be completed no more than 60 days prior to the ISP meeting.**
  - b. **ISP meetings must be held within 365 days from the previous ISP meeting. Meetings are scheduled 2 – 8 weeks in advance.**

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- Q6**
- a. When and in what format will the vendor receive ISP meeting date data for individuals served through the waiver?
  - b. When and in what format will the vendor receive ISP anniversary date data for individuals served through the waiver?

- A6**
- a. **Quarterly data will be transmitted through the SIS Online Recipient Module.**
  - b. **SAME.**

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**Q7** Many states permit the vendor to bill a partial rate when assessments are cancelled with less than 48 hour notice and a full rate when a cancellation occurs or is required after the assessor has gone onsite for a scheduled interview.

Will the Vendor be permitted to bill either a full or partial rate for an assessment whenever the vendor can demonstrate due diligence to schedule and confirm the assessment yet circumstances outside of the Vendor's control caused:

- a. Respondents to cancel the assessment within 48 hours of the scheduled time of the assessment?
- b. Less than two respondents meeting AAIDD respondent criteria to have attended the entire SIS interview?

- A7**
- a. **Vendor shall propose a cancellation rate.**
  - b. **SAME.**
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Q8 Clearly all assessments must generate reliable and valid scores reflecting an individual's support needs. Standard SIS protocol suggests that, in situations when valid information cannot be obtained from identified respondents, the interview should be stopped (to be rescheduled at another time or with alternate respondents).  
Will the vendor be permitted to bill for these assessments?

**A8 Vendor shall propose a cancellation rate.**

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Q9 The document states: *The support plan will be available to any interviewer who is not familiar with the individual being interviewed as needed.*

- a. In what format (electronic, paper) will the support plan be available?
- b. Will the interviewer have an ability to access the support plan prior to the interview?
- c. Please describe how the interview may access the support plan for review.

**A9**

- a. **The referenced document is under revision. Support plans are currently not available.**
- b. **No.**
- c. **Plans are not available.**

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Q10 This document suggests that the Support Coordinator (SC) plays a central role in liaising with respondents and that the SC must ensure that appropriate respondents are present at the interview.

- a. Will this SC role continue?
- b. Will SCs be responsible to identify or suggest appropriate SIS respondents to the Offeror's SIS schedulers?

**A10**

- a. **SC role is determined by each locality.**
- b. **Vendor(s) will receive suggestions on appropriate SIS respondents from the localities.**

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Q11 This document suggests that: *A copy of the long form report is sent to providers/families/individuals within 10 business days of completion by the Support Coordinator/Case Manager.*

And also states that: *The Interviewer must enter the results into SIS-Online® and send the hard copy of the report to individuals, providers and family members as appropriate within 10 working days.*

- a. Will the Offeror or the Support Coordinator be responsible to send a hardcopy of the SIS report to individuals, providers, and family members?
- b. If the Offeror is required to send the hardcopy, will the Offeror have access to determine all current providers and addresses, and access to current individual/family address information?

**A11**

- a. **The Support Coordinator is responsible for sending these to the team, family and individual.**
- b. **N/A.**

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Q12 The document states: *The individual must receive an informational flyer or an explanation about the SIS® from the support coordinator/case manager.*

Will this responsibility remain with the support coordinator, or will it transfer to vendor?

**A12 A new process is being developed.**

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Q13 The RFP states: *All Interviewers and Trainers must attend a 2-3 day Person-Centered Thinking orientation and SIS® (inclusive of the Appeals process) training prior to beginning assessments.*

- a. Is this training initially conducted by state personnel? How many training sessions will the state be able to perform during the Offeror's implementation phase?
- b. Will the Offeror's trainers be able to assume responsibility for this training once they have demonstrated competence to do so (e.g., will the state permit the vendor to utilize a train-the-trainer model for this component)?

**A13**

- a. **Yes. Monthly training sessions will be scheduled – not to exceed three in total.**
- b. **Yes, upon satisfactory completion of all required trainings.**

**Q14**

- a. Will the Department be responsible for costs associated with all AAIDD training activities needed to ensure assessors are trained for both the Child and Adult SIS?
- b. Will the Department consider covering costs associated with AAIDD fees for Annual training/refreshers and IRQR for 1 (ONE) additional vendor trainer so the vendor may have both an AAIDD-qualified SIS Adult and a qualified SIS Child trainer?
- c. Will the Department consider covering costs associated with AAIDD fees for *initial* AAIDD training for additional interviewers who specialize in the Child SIS?
- d. Will the Department consider covering costs associated with AAIDD fees for *Annual* IRQR for additional interviewers who specialize in the Child SIS?

**A14**

- a. **See section 3.2.11**
- b. **No. See section 3.2.11**
- c. **Interviewers will be trained by a departmental staff member authorized to conduct SIS trainings.**
- d. **There is no annual IRQR requirement for Child SIS at this time.**

**Q15** Based on manpower algorithms developed over several states for the provision of statewide assessments, we estimate that 18 to 20 assessors, who are distributed across the state according to population density, with assessors in rural areas completing smaller annual volumes and assessors in urban areas completing larger annual volumes, would provide optimal coverage to ensure that assessments are consistently completed in a timely manner. Would the Department consider covering the cost of AAIDD initial training 18 to 20 SIS assessors?

**A15 No. See Section 3.2.11.**

**Q16** The RFP states the annual SIS volumes will be 4500. To be accurate, cost estimates must be based on more granular data regarding projected volumes.  
Please provide the following volumes upon which the Offeror's cost estimates should be based:

Type of assessment	Total number of persons being served	Estimated volume of SIS assessments to be completed in the first year	Estimate of likely increase or decrease in volume in successive years (in percentages)
Adult SIS- (Triennial)	9624	3208	Approximately 3.8% based

			on the total of 10169 (05/14/14)
Child SIS-(Biennial)	545	250	The DD Waiver will add approximately 310 per year beginning in FY17
Persons in Training Centers—PRN	650	325	
Emergency SIS—PRN		N/A	
Change of status SIS—PRN		217	
Persons newly entering services		200	
SIS assessments resulting from appeals		100	

**A16**

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Q17 What percent of persons to be evaluated have both *residential/home based* services AND *day/employment* services?

**A17 12 percent.**

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Q18 In order to accurately plan assessor distribution, the vendor must know the approximate distribution of persons to be assessed.

- a. Please provide a volume breakdown of total adult SIS interviews to be conducted by county or CSB and across each training center.
- b. Please provide a volume breakdown of total child SIS interviews to be conducted by county or CSB and across each training center.

**A18 See Attachment 7 for details.**

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Q19 What is the turnaround time for Emergency SIS assessments?

**A19 The department does not conduct emergency SIS assessments.**

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Q20

- a. Will the vendor conduct SIS assessments that are triggered by transitions from Training Centers to the community?
- b. If so, what will the turnaround time for these assessments be?

**A20**

- a. **Vendor(s) will be responsible to complete up to 4500 SIS assessments per year regardless of trigger mechanism.**
- b. **Transition from a Training Center does not necessitate a SIS assessment.**

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Q21 The RFP requires that the vendor: *Ensure AAIDD recognition is obtained (a) prior to independent administration of SIS® interviews, and (b) every year or more often as an important form of quality assurance.* The vendor is clearly required to ensure that all assessors maintain continued compliance with AAIDD protocols and standards. It has been our experience that states typically require that all the vendor's *in-state* SIS **trainers** (versus all assessors) attend SIS "update" trainings and undergo periodic re-certification by AAIDD Master

Trainers. In this well-accepted model, the annually AAIDD-qualified state trainer *must* update and requalify *every* SIS assessor (through IRQR testing) at least semi-annually to ensure continuing adherence to AAIDD protocol.

We note that HSRI, in their Project Task 1.5 Report, did not limit *best practice* in conducting annual IRQRs to those conducted by AAIDD, instead noting that *best practice* requires that the annual IRQR be done by individuals endorsed by AAIDD to conduct formal IRQRs.

Will this model to *conduct annual IRQRs* also be acceptable to the Department?

**A21** No. Please see section 3.2.11 and 4.1.2.f and 4.1.2.g for details.

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Q22 In our experience, a model **allowing AAIDD-endorsed state trainers to create new assessors** (through training and IRQR testing) has been *empirically* shown to produce high adherence to AAIDD protocols, high-quality SIS data that is reliable and consistent, and increased cost efficiency for states, while permitting the vendor to flexibly onboard new assessors as needed. Such flexibility to train, test, and onboard new assessors as needed, using the in-state AAIDD-qualified trainer, is vital to ensuring that planned triennial assessment schedules are not interrupted when new assessors are needed.

HSRI, in their Project Task 1.5 Report, has endorsed this model as meeting best practice standards, saying: 1) *Interviewers are qualified to conduct a SIS interview (i.e., endorsed by AAIDD **or deemed competent by another qualified trainer**); and, 2) Where a train-the-trainer model is applied, the local qualified or Advanced SIS Interviewers are trained, endorsed, and recognized by an AAIDD Advanced interviewer **or by individuals likewise qualified to train and recognize interviewers.***

Will this model to train, test and certify *new assessors* also be acceptable to the Department?

**A22** See answer A21.

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Q23

- a. Have the Department and AAIDD committed to a date or targeted a mutually agreeable range of dates for SIS® assessor and trainer education to be provided by AAIDD Master Trainers?
- b. If so, please specify the committed dates or the targeted date ranges.

**A23**

- a. No.
- b. N/A.

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Q24 SIS Venture will not be available for the Child SIS until sometime in 2015. Is SIS Online currently available for entry of Child SIS data?

**A24** Yes.

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Q25 The AAIDD training model necessitates that each trainee conducts approximately 6 complete practice interviews in order to ensure competency prior to testing by AAIDD Master Trainers (via Interviewer Reliability and Qualification Reviews). Each interview requires a complete respondent team comprised of a consumer and at least two (2) other persons who know the individual well. We estimate up to 120 practice interviews would be required.

Will the Department collaborate with the vendor to develop an outreach plan to generate sufficient volunteer respondent teams to participate in these AAIDD-required practice interviews?

**A25 Yes.**

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**Q26** The RFP states: *Offeror shall ... ensure that there is at least one respondent from each of the major services – residential/home-based services and day/employment services as applicable.*

SIS interviews nationally average about 90 minutes each (plus time for supplemental risk questions, when needed), although some interviews can take significantly longer. Because of this use of provider staff resources, some states have experienced significant provider non-compliance in attending SIS interviews.

- a. Will participation in the SIS interview be *mandatory* for provider staff that are identified as key SIS respondents for individuals being served through waiver or ICF/ID services?
- b. When provider staff have been identified as a key respondent for a SIS interview, will providers be incentivized by the Department in any way for attending SIS interviews, or dis-incentivized in any way for declining to participate in SIS interviews?

**A26**

- a. **Providers are expected to attend the SIS assessment.**
- b. **No.**

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**Q27** The RFP states that: *All data will be stored in SIS® Online. No HIPAA data will be stored by the Offeror unless specifically requested by DBHDS in a business agreement; And, Offeror must submit a scheduling plan using the SIS® Online Recipient Module used in Virginia for scheduling and contacting respondents.*

Early indications suggest that SIS Enterprise functionality, even with the soon to be rolled out Recipient Scheduling Module, is not likely to have sufficient capabilities to provide mandatory (RFP 4.2) reports with the degree of detail most helpful to the Department. In addition, it is not likely to contain sufficiently detailed scheduling workflow to allow the Department or the vendor to confidently monitor or ensure other project requirements (quality management of deliverables, advance scheduling logistics matching across several recipient calendars, reporting and monitoring of case status and/or of barriers to deliverables or workflow).

If the Recipient Scheduling Module within SIS Enterprise does not provide sufficient program management data to ensure quality control of project scheduling logistics, will the Department enter into a Business Associate Agreement with the vendor to so the vendor can provide a robust SIS scheduling and workflow tracking solution?

**A27 No. The SIS Online Recipient Module will be used. The Department and Vendor(s) will work collaboratively on the Recipient Module.**

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**Q28** Please provide a link or access to demo Virginia's SIS Online Recipient Module and access to examples of standard reports available through the SIS Online.

**A28 The Recipient Module is currently being updated and unavailable for demo.**

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**Q29** Should the Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal be packaged, sealed, and submitted separately?

**A29 No. Each copy of the Technical and Cost proposal should be packaged together.**

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**Q30** Is the Offeror's response to **RFP Section 5.4.2.1 Corporate Qualifications and Experience** meant to be included in the Executive Summary or treated as a separate section?

**A30 Corporate Qualifications and Experience is a section of the Executive Summary.**

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Q31

- a. Should the sections *RFP Cover Sheet, Executive Summary, Corporate Qualification and Experience*, and *Attachments II* through *VI* be packaged in the same binder with Volume I: Technical Proposal? If not, how should they be arranged?
- b. Should *Attachments II* through *VI* be included as addenda to the Technical Proposal? If not, where should they be included?

A31

- a. **Yes.**
- b. **Yes.**

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Q32 Please specify the number and frequency of onsite meetings with DBHDS that are required of the vendor.

A32 **Once, Monthly and as needed.**

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Q33 To ensure that the ongoing fixed cost to the Department per SIS assessment is not artificially inflated by the addition of one-time implementation costs, would the Department permit the successful bidder to bill separately for costs associated with implementation activities?

These costs would include: non-AAIDD costs associated with training assessors, PMO staff training, equipment purchases, deployment of project oversight data systems and any and all costs associated with implementation. Carving these one-time costs out of the per assessment rate and out of the ongoing PMO monthly fee, the Department will realize lower fees over the life of the contract.

A33 **Yes. Vendor(s) can propose separate start-up costs and must support all numbers with data.**

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Q34 The RFP states: *The following Terms and Conditions will be incorporated into any contract awarded through the solicitation for Juvenile Competency Restoration Services.*

Did the Department intend *Juvenile Competency Restoration Services* to read *Support Intensity Scale (SIS®) Assessments and Management Activities services*?

A34 **Reference to Juvenile Competency Restoration Services is in error.**

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Q35 This bond described appears to be tailored to large construction bids and is unusually large for a project such as the SIS. Average bond costs are \$20 per every \$1000. As providing this coverage for the full 5 year SIS contract amount could be very expensive for the Department, would the Department: CHRIS?

- a. Confirm that a performance bond is required for this non-construction contract?
- b. Consider requiring a bond that annually covers that year's project amount?
- c. Decrease the bond amount each successive year (as the total dollars remaining in the contract will also decline with each year)?
- d. Consider removing or reducing the bond requirement if the Offeror is a longtime vendor of the Department's in good standing with the state? Please specify.

A35 **The Standard Language on Performance and Payment Bond is removed from the RFP.**

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Q36 Would the Department accept 3 years of audited financials and references as a current and longstanding vendor with the Department (14 years) as proof of the bidder's financial stability and performance in lieu of this performance bond?



**A36**     **See A35.**

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- Q37     When needed, the services of sign and foreign language interpreters are crucial to ensure that information gained from SIS interviews best represents an individual's support needs. Census data for Virginia suggest that approximately 3% of persons may require interpreter services.
- a.       Does the state have sign or language interpretation services available for persons requiring a SIS assessment?
  - b.       Is the vendor or the Case Manager responsible to arrange interpreters, when needed?
  - c.       Shall the vendor incorporate the cost of providing interpreters into its proposal?

**A37**

- a.       **Yes.**
- b.       **Vendor.**
- c.       **Vendor(s) can propose an hourly rate for interpretation services by language.**

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- Q38     HSRI suggests that scores obtained using the Supplemental Risk Assessment are not typically valid for rate allocation purposes unless assessors have been specifically trained on HSRI's method of administering these items.
- a.       Will the state cover costs associated with HSRI training to administer the Supplemental Risk Assessment items?
  - b.       Shall the vendor incorporate the cost of arranging HSRI training in use of the Supplemental Risk Assessment?

**A38**

- a.       **Yes.**
- b.       **No.**

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- Q39     HSRI best practices require that results of supplemental question responses are verified through review of the individual's current written records.
- a.       How will assessors gain access to the appropriate records to review? In particular, what is the Department's preferred mode of access to records when an interview takes place in a setting other than a provider setting?
  - b.       Will providers or case managers be required to make this information available to SIS interviewers at the time of the interview?
  - c.       Will the vendor be required to retain documented evidence of information leading to scoring decisions for the Supplemental Risk Assessment?
  - d.       Please describe the Department's required protocols, if any, when conducting the Supplemental Risk Assessment, for verifying and documenting extraordinary medical and or behavioral needs via record review when scoring supplemental questions.

**A39**

- a.       **Vendor(s) will not provide supplement question reviews.**
- b.       **N/A**
- c.       **N/A**
- d.       **N/A**

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- Q40     When significant aspects of a state's uniform assessment program for waiver recipients are changed, especially when assessments are intended to be tied to rate allocation, it becomes vital that providers have confidence in the process and the entities conducting assessments. It is often important that providers and stakeholders have opportunity to gain confidence in the assessment vendor.

To this end, will the state require or desire the vendor to participate in any onsite or web-based stakeholder activities? Please describe the Department’s preferences in terms of numbers of meetings and types of stakeholders.

**A40      Yes. Two meetings per quarter. One for case management/support coordinators and one for provider roundtable. Additional shared training as needed.**

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**Addendum Acknowledgement**

The undersigned acknowledges receipt of this Addendum and by signature confirms the information contained herein shall become part of RFP 720C-04393-14C as amended through this Addendum. Offerors must return this Addendum as part of its proposal. Failure to return signed Addenda shall be grounds to reject the Offerors proposal.

IN COMPLIANCE WITH THIS ADDEDUM AND THE REFERENCED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND TO ALL THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED THEREIN, IN FACT OR BY REFERENCE, THE UNDERSIGNED OFFERS AND AGREES TO FURNISH THE SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ATTACHED SIGNED PROPOSAL AND ADDENDUM OR AS MUTUALLY AGREED UPON BY SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATION.

**Offeror Name and Address:**

**Telephone:**

**FEI/FIN Number:**

**Date:**

**By:** *(Official Signature in Ink)*

**Printed Name:**

**Title:**